

Update on Delta Mercury TMDL Collaborative

Release of Draft Basin Plan Amendment Staff Reports

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) released its proposed Delta Methylmercury Basin Plan amendment, along with a scientific peer review draft report (draft BPA report), on June 27, 2006. The reports are available on the internet at <http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/programs/tmdl/deltahg.html>.

The draft BPA report describes the components of a proposed Basin Plan amendment for the control of Methylmercury in the Delta. It identifies a range of alternatives for fish tissue objectives and implementation options to reduce methylmercury and inorganic mercury loads in the Delta. The Basin Plan, which is the water quality control plan for the Central Valley, currently does not address mercury in the Delta.

The draft BPA report was sent to scientific peer reviewers in June 2006, and is being released to the public as a courtesy to facilitate early development of comments and questions. After scientific peer review, staff will revise the report and circulate the revised draft for public comments. During this process, staff will meet with stakeholders to discuss the proposed amendment. After incorporating public comments, staff will recommend Basin Plan amendments to the Regional Board at a public hearing anticipated for late Fall 2006.

Status of Consultant Contracts

Thanks to contributions from Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (\$10,000), Yolo County (\$10,000), and Department of Fish and Game (\$5,000), the Collaborative has initiated a contract with TetraTech, Inc., for a mercury technical expert to assist the Collaborative in shaping its feedback to the Regional Board. The Collaborative is also pursuing a contract for an environmental economics consultant, but is currently seeking additional funding (~\$15,000) for that particular contract; CSUS's Office of Water Programs will likely be conducting the economic analysis once sufficient funding has been obtained.

Some members of the Collaborative met with the TetraTech contractors on July 13, 2006 to go over the contract scope and tasks, and the entire Collaborative met with the contractors today (July 27, 2006) to relay some initial input on the draft BPA report and the Regional Board process.

Over the next 2-3 months, in preparation for the Regional Board hearing at which the proposed Delta Methylmercury Basin Plan amendment will be adopted (expected October-November 2006), the Collaborative will be working closely with TetraTech contractors to offer its recommendations on how the Regional Board can most effectively implement its program in the Delta.